

CLAIMS

1. A system for capturing and displaying images of participants in a videoconference comprising: means for placing the image of the remote participant in the line of sight between the local participant and the local camera capturing the image of said local participant, whereby eye contact is established and maintained during the videoconference, comprising:
 - a. common and pre-existing personal computer monitors, including cathode ray tubes and liquid crystal displays of desktop and laptop and notebook computers, and
 - b. common and pre-existing personal computer video cameras, including cameras with a flat base, and
 - c. partial- or full-screen images of remote participants, and
 - d. common and pre-existing videoconferencing software, and
 - e. common and pre-existing communications network connections.
2. An apparatus of claim 1 comprising the elements of:
 - a. a rigid construction of two pieces of reflective material, one that is fully reflective and the other that is partially reflective, wherein
 - b. the planes of said reflective materials are positioned parallel to each other, and at a 45-degree angles toward the local participant and away from the image of the remote participant on the monitor, and
 - c. a camera positioned behind the partially reflective material on top, whereby the local participant looks through said material at the lens of the camera, and
 - d. the partially reflective material in front the camera reflects the image of the remote participant off the monitor by way of a fully reflective, whereby
 - e. the local user of the system simultaneously views the image of the remote participant in the videoconference while also looking directly into the camera.

3. An apparatus of claim 1 comprising the elements of:

- a. a folding construction of two pieces of reflective material, one that is fully reflective and the other that is partially reflective, wherein
- b. the planes of said reflective materials are positioned parallel to each other, and at a 45-degree angles toward the local participant and away from the image of the remote participant on the monitor, and
- c. a camera positioned behind the partially reflective material on top, whereby the local participant looks through said material at the lens of the camera, and
- d. the partially reflective material in front the camera reflects the image of the remote participant off the monitor by way of a fully reflective, whereby
- e. the local user of the system simultaneously views the image of the remote participant in the videoconference while also looking directly into the camera.

4. An apparatus of claim 1 comprising the elements of:

- a. a rigid construction of two pieces of reflective material, one that is fully reflective and the other that is partially reflective, wherein
- b. the planes of said reflective materials are positioned parallel to each other, and at a 45-degree angles away from the local participant and toward the image of the remote participant on the monitor, and
- c. the partially reflective material is placed directly in front of the image of the remote participant on the monitor screen and wherein the local participant looks through said material at the image of the remote participant, and
- d. the image of the local participant is partially reflected by said material to the fully reflective material

positioned directly above it which is positioned directly in front of the video camera lens whereby

- e. the local user of the system simultaneously views the image of the remote participant in the videoconference while also looking directly into the camera.

5. An apparatus of claim 1 comprising the elements of:

- a. a folding construction of two pieces of reflective material, one that is fully reflective and the other that is partially reflective, wherein
- b. the planes of said reflective materials are positioned parallel to each other, and at a 45-degree angles away from the local participant and toward the image of the remote participant on the monitor, and
- c. the partially reflective material is placed directly in front of the image of the remote participant on the monitor screen and wherein the local participant looks through said material at the image of the remote participant, and
- d. the image of the local participant is partially reflected by said material to the fully reflective material positioned directly above it which is positioned directly in front of the video camera lens whereby
- e. the local user of the system simultaneously views the image of the remote participant in the videoconference while also looking directly into the camera.

6. A system for capturing and displaying images of participants in a videoconference comprising: means for placing the image of the remote participant in the line of sight between the local participant and the local camera capturing the image of said local participant, whereby eye contact is established and maintained during the videoconference, comprising:

- a. common and pre-existing personal computer monitors, including cathode ray tubes and liquid crystal displays of desktop and laptop and notebook computers, and
- b. specially built or integrated personal computer video cameras, and
- c. partial- or full-screen images of remote participants, and
- d. common and pre-existing videoconferencing software, and
- e. common and pre-existing communications network connections.

7. An apparatus of claim 6 comprising the elements of:

- a. a rigid construction of two pieces of reflective material, one that is fully reflective and the other that is partially reflective, wherein
- b. the planes of said reflective materials are positioned parallel to each other, and at a 45-degree angles toward the local participant and away from the image of the remote participant on the monitor, and
- c. a camera positioned behind the partially reflective material on top, whereby the local participant looks through said material at the lens of the camera, and
- d. the partially reflective material in front the camera reflects the image of the remote participant off the monitor by way of a fully reflective, whereby
- e. the local user of the system simultaneously views the image of the remote participant in the videoconference while also looking directly into the camera.

8. An apparatus of claim 6 comprising the elements of:

- a. a folding construction of two pieces of reflective material, one that is fully reflective and the other that is partially reflective, wherein
- b. the planes of said reflective materials are positioned parallel to each other, and at a 45-degree angles toward

the local participant and away from the image of the remote participant on the monitor, and

- c. a camera positioned behind the partially reflective material on top, whereby the local participant looks through said material at the lens of the camera, and
- d. the partially reflective material in front the camera reflects the image of the remote participant off the monitor by way of a fully reflective, whereby
- e. the local user of the system simultaneously views the image of the remote participant in the videoconference while also looking directly into the camera.

9. An apparatus of claim 6 comprising the elements of:

- a. a rigid construction of two pieces of reflective material, one that is fully reflective and the other that is partially reflective, wherein
- b. the planes of said reflective materials are positioned parallel to each other, and at a 45-degree angles away from the local participant and toward the image of the remote participant on the monitor, and
- c. the partially reflective material is placed directly in front of the image of the remote participant on the monitor screen and wherein the local participant looks through said material at the image of the remote participant, and
- d. the image of the local participant is partially reflected by said material to the fully reflective material positioned directly above it which is positioned directly in front of the video camera lens, whereby
- e. the local user of the system simultaneously views the image of the remote participant in the videoconference while also looking directly into the camera.

10. An apparatus of claim 6 comprising the elements of:
 - a. a folding construction of two pieces of reflective material, one that is fully reflective and the other that is partially reflective, wherein
 - b. the planes of said reflective materials are positioned parallel to each other, and at a 45-degree angles away from the local participant and toward the image of the remote participant on the monitor, and
 - c. the partially reflective material is placed directly in front of the image of the remote participant on the monitor screen and wherein the local participant looks through said material at the image of the remote participant, and
 - d. the image of the local participant is partially reflected by said material to the fully reflective material positioned directly above it which is positioned directly in front of the video camera lens, whereby
 - e. the local user of the system simultaneously views the image of the remote participant in the videoconference while also looking directly into the camera.